

THE NO-CRUNCH WORKOUT

Add this sneaky abs-tightening trick to your total-body workout, and get a rock-hard stomach.

BY LEE DAVY NSCA-CPT, CFC

WHEN YOU'RE on the street, take notice of the guy at the construction site: he's climbing a ladder, twisting, working with both hands. He's **not just isolating one muscle group**—he's using his biceps, quads, and his abs for balance. Or consider the hockey player taking a slap shot: he uses his abs as he shifts his weight from one leg to the other for rotational power. Any movement you do outside the gym uses your **abs as stabilizers**, and so should your functional training program. If you're just doing crunches—like most people—you're training them wrong.

The abdominals can be broken down into four parts: the transversus abdominis (TVA), internal oblique, external oblique, and the rectus abdominis. Until you build up strength, train your abdominals in this order because that's the sequence for fatigue.

Most people have difficulty **activating the TVA**, since it is the innermost abdominal muscle. But it's a very important

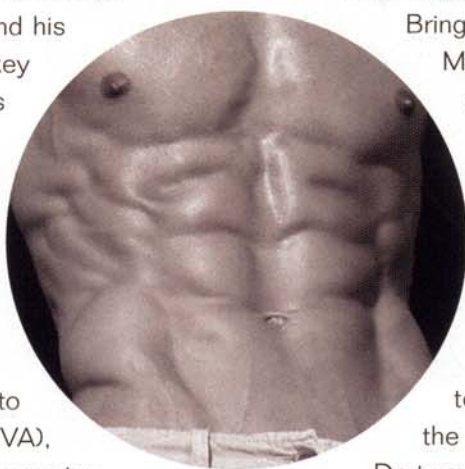
muscle, as it supports your spine. To strengthen it, try step one, below. When you can do that move easily, move on to steps two and three.

STEP ONE Lie down on your back, with knees bent. Bring your belly button in toward your spine. Make sure you're able to breathe through your diaphragm and can speak during this movement. Hold for 10 seconds. Do two to three sets of 10 reps. Once you can do this move, try it again with your legs straight, then go onto the next step.

STEP TWO Identical to step one, but with an added Kegel exercise (like trying to cut off urine flow, where you tighten the pelvic floor). Again, hold for 10 seconds.

Do two to three sets of 10 reps. Move on to the next step after you can handle this with ease.

STEP THREE Like step two. But this time lift one leg slightly off the floor. Hold for 10 seconds. Do two to three sets of 10 reps, and then do the other leg. ■



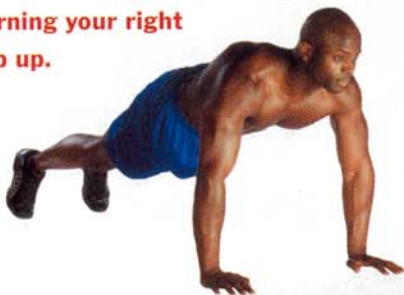
TOTAL-BODY ABS PROGRAM

Once you learn how to activate the TVA properly, you can consciously engage it while doing the following exercises. Using your TVA will become easier and easier, and you'll be stronger.

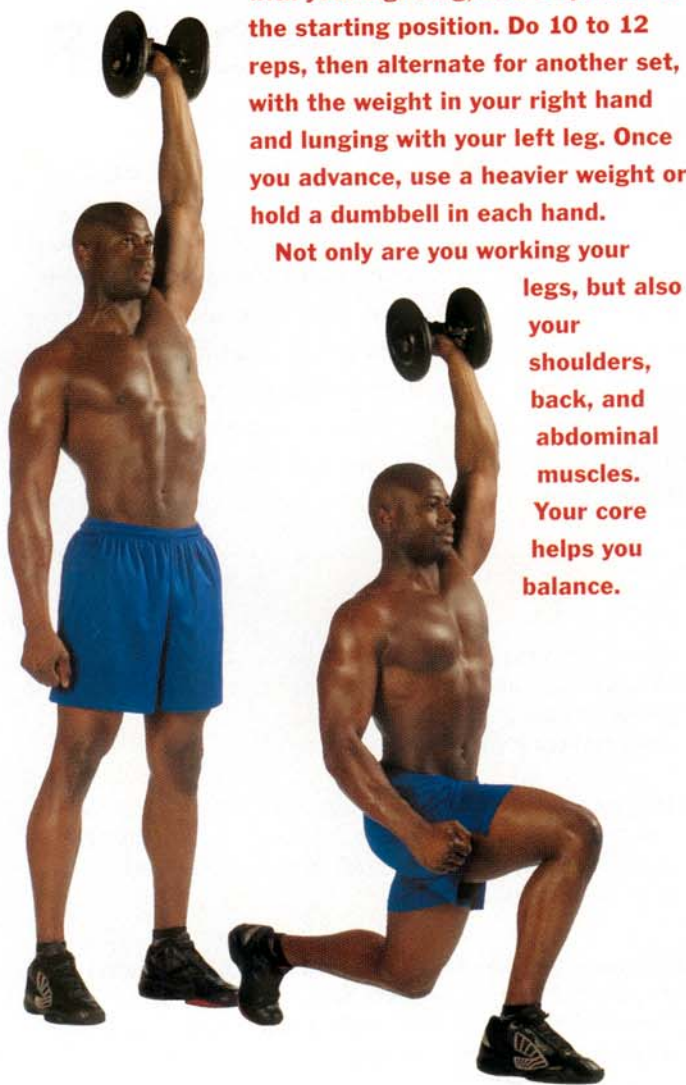
PUSH-UP WITH A TWIST Do this with your hands on the floor or on a bosu, a device that looks like half a stability ball with a solid base. Before each push-up, activate your TVA by drawing your belly button up toward

your spine. Starting from a raised position, do a push-up. Then, in the raised position, do a twist by putting your left leg under your right and turning your right hip up.

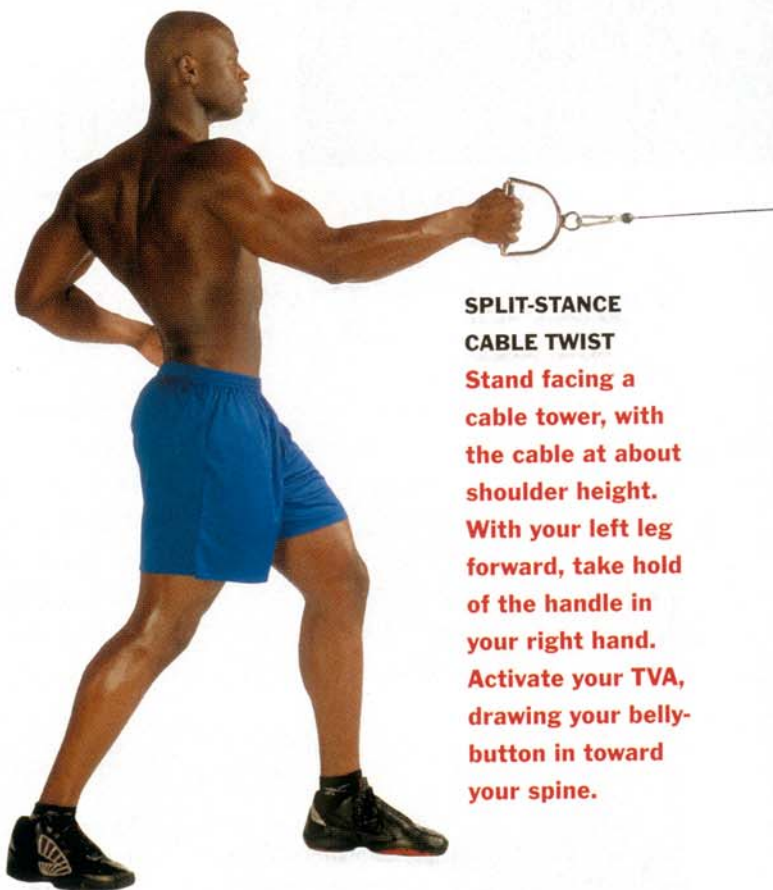
Return your legs to parallel and do another push-up, followed by a twist to the opposite side. Do as many reps as possible. This exercise works your chest, triceps, and core.



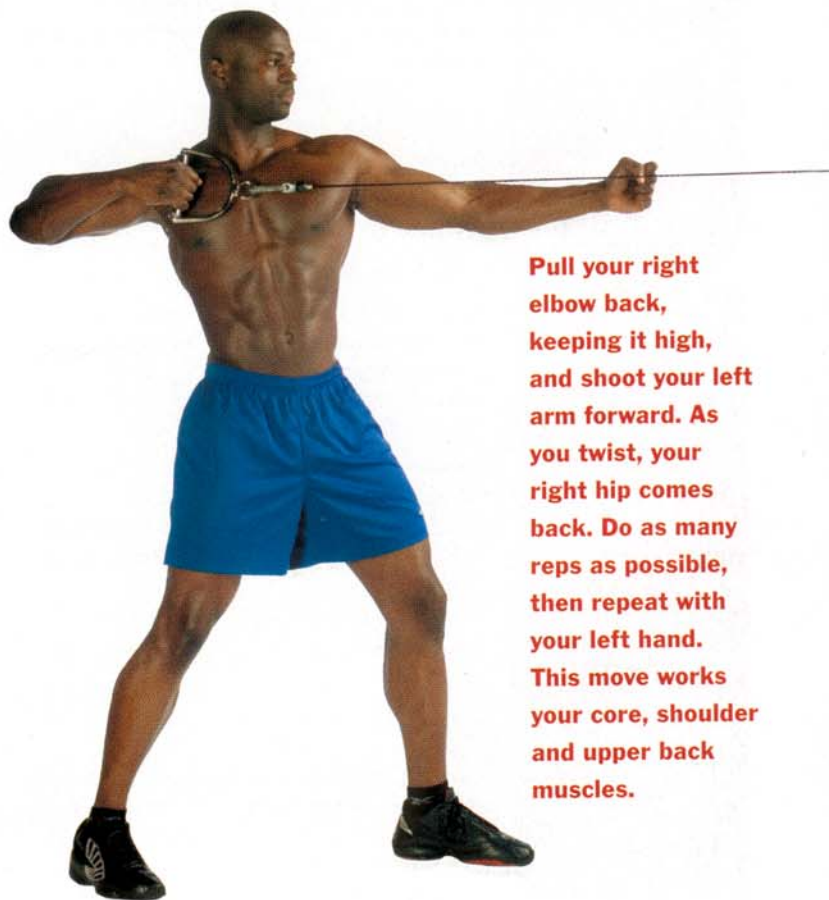
CROSS LUNGE Take a light dumbbell in your left hand. Hold it up over your head. Activate your TVA, drawing in your belly button. Lunge forward with your right leg, and step back to the starting position. Do 10 to 12 reps, then alternate for another set, with the weight in your right hand and lunging with your left leg. Once you advance, use a heavier weight or hold a dumbbell in each hand.



Not only are you working your legs, but also your shoulders, back, and abdominal muscles. Your core helps you balance.



SPLIT-STANCE CABLE TWIST
Stand facing a cable tower, with the cable at about shoulder height. With your left leg forward, take hold of the handle in your right hand. Activate your TVA, drawing your belly-button in toward your spine.



Pull your right elbow back, keeping it high, and shoot your left arm forward. As you twist, your right hip comes back. Do as many reps as possible, then repeat with your left hand. This move works your core, shoulder and upper back muscles.



ABS EXPERT

Each issue we feature an abs-building technique from a different trainer. Meet Lee Davy, CEO and director of conditioning at Dynamic Conditioning Centre (dcentres.ca) in Toronto, Canada.

"I always try to push my limits, physically and mentally. I have to practice what I preach."

Are you a trainer? Send your abs secrets to editorial@maxfitmag.com, or by mail to *Maximum Fitness*, 5775 McLaughlin Road, Mississauga, ON, Canada. L5R 3P7. If we print yours, we'll pay you \$100.